

Saskatchewan's independent newsmagazine

# BRIARPATCH

Volume 26, Number 6

July / August 1997

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## THE CANADIAN CONNECTION

Drugs, money-laundering  
and the Canadian banks

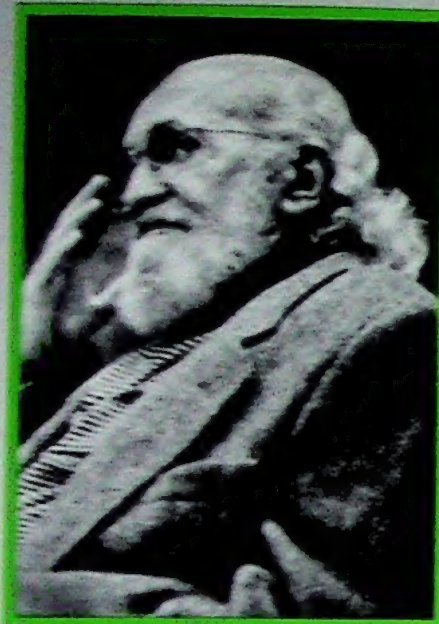




## PAULO FREIRE

Paulo Freire, who pioneered linking adult literacy with social justice, has died at the age of 75. Through his work with the poor in Brazil, Freire believed they could not be motivated or empowered to become literate unless literacy was a relevant tool for improving their lives.

After a military coup d'état in 1964, Freire was jailed and then spent the next 16 years in exile. His theories have had a significant influence on socialist revolutions in countries such as Nicaragua and Mozambique.



## McDISNEY

Earlier this year 200 women workers at the Keyhinge factory in Vietnam fell ill, 25 collapsed and three were hospitalized because they were exposed to acetane. The young women, who work nine to ten hours a day, seven days a week for as little as six cents an hour, produce give-away toy Disney characters for McDonald's restaurants.

## NIKE

On April 22, 10,000 Indonesian workers at a sub-contracted Nike shoe factory took to the streets to

protest the subcontractor's failure to pay the new minimum wage of US\$2.50 a day. They quickly won a raise, but a Nike spokesperson told the *Wall Street Journal* "there's concern...whether or not Indonesia could be...pricing itself out of the market."

In Canada, Nike will close its Cambridge, Ontario Bauer skate manufacturing plant by the end of 1997, laying off 400 workers.

## SOLIDARITY

Garment workers in Guatemala have scored a major victory in winning the right to negotiate a first collective agreement with Phillips-Van Heusen, the giant U.S.-based shirt-making company. If negotiations are successful, the members of the STE-CAMOSA union will become the only Guatemalan maquiladora workers protected by a union contract.

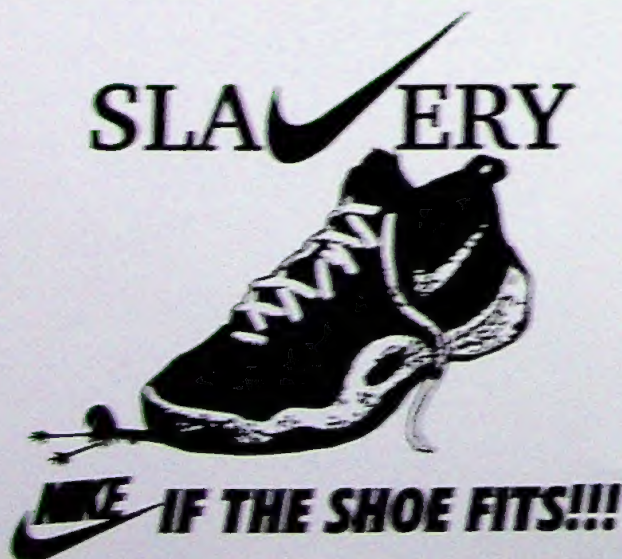
The P-VH victory is the result of an innovative union drive that combined a grass roots membership blitz in Guatemala with simultaneous solidarity actions in the U.S. and Canada.

## NEW NAME

The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union has changed its name. The union's new name, approved unanimously at its April convention, is the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

## BRIARPATCH T-SHIRTS

We've still got a few Briarpatch T-shirts for sale. They're printed in black and red on unbleached cotton. Extra large size only. Support the alternative media. Just send \$18 to Briarpatch, 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, SK S4P 2R7.





# BRIARPATCH

JULY / AUGUST 1997

Volume 26, Issue 6

## The Empire Strikes Back ..... 3

A gutsy new editor turned a local newspaper into something more than just a liner for birdcages. That all changed when Conrad Black bought out the paper.

## Brazil of the North ..... 4

The destruction of Canada's forests is one of the country's best kept secrets.

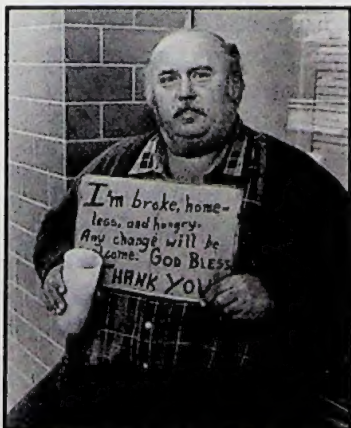
## Car Free is Care-Free .. 5

The case for car share co-ops.

## Saskatchewan's Training Strategy ..... 7

Does the provincial government have the political will to ensure that there are jobs for all who are able and wish to work?

## Challenging Poverty in the West ..... 9



Some practical ideas to end the "poverty industry."

## Youth Crime ..... 11

Are jails and work camps the solution?

## Attention Shoppers ..... 13

Who will pay the price for Eaton's bankruptcy?

## The Canadian Connection ..... 15

Drugs, money laundering and Canadian banks.

## Preston Manning and the Politics of Hate ..... 18

The undertaker comes calling.

## Reform's Victory ..... 21

Reform expected a major breakthrough in the East and to elbow the Tories off the Canadian political stage. They failed on both accounts.

## Where Next for the Federal NDP? ..... 23

Despite winning 21 seats and regaining party status, it was a mixed victory for Canada's social democrats.

## The British Election ..... 26



New Labour, regionalization and self-determination.

## Say What? ..... 31

People say the darndest things.

## Prairie Notebook ..... 32

By expanding the number of "essential" public services, the Manitoba government is increasing its attack on the right to strike.



Briarpatch is Saskatchewan's independent alternative newsmagazine committed to building a socialist democratic society. We provide an open forum for disadvantaged peoples and support progressive movements working to change unjust structures and build a genuine political and economic democracy. We support peace, equality, democracy, social justice, Aboriginal self-determination, and the protection of the environment. We oppose the oppression of people on the basis of nation, class, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation. Briarpatch magazine was founded in 1973 and is published ten times a year by Briarpatch Inc., an independent non-profit organization. Many of the articles and photographs in Briarpatch are contributed by volunteers. Deadline for the receipt of articles is 45 days preceding publication. Unsolicited contributions will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Briarpatch board of directors or staff. Articles may be reproduced provided proper credits are given. Briarpatch is a member of the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association and the staff are members of RWDSU Local 568. The Briarpatch office is at Huston House, 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, S4P 2R7. Phone (306)525-2949. One year subscription: \$24.61. Unions & institutions: \$35.31. Publications Mail Registration No. 4171. ISSN 0703-8968. Membership in Briarpatch Inc. is open to groups or individuals upon application and payment of a \$1.00 membership fee. Briarpatch is indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index and Alternative Press Index and available on microform from Micromedia, 20 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON, M5C 2N8 and from the Underground Press Collection, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI, 48106-1346, U.S.A.



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George Manz

**Dear Briarpatch,**

In response to the article in the June 1997 issue of *Briarpatch*, "Day of Mourning," I would like to set the record straight.

The Office and Professional Employees Union, Local 397, and Saskatchewan Government Insurance have had a commemorative ceremony in the workplace on April 28 since 1994. We unveiled a commemorative plaque in the lobby of the Head Office building in 1996.

Every year, a moment's silence is observed, flags are flown at half-mast and a message is commemorated over the intercom to all workers reminding them of the importance of the day, asking them to rededicate themselves to a healthy and safe workplace.

**David A. Miller**  
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**representative**  
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**Dear Briarpatch,**

Please excuse my tardiness in renewing. I do enjoy the magazine, especially the recent article on the New Left Forum. I'd like to hear more about this interesting new trend in Saskatchewan politics. How does the NLF relate to the Left Green Alliance of John Warnock, or to the Forum Party in Alberta (which I regard as mainly just sectarian, without a strong "left" or socialist orientation)?

I was disappointed in the rather uncritical cover story in March on Maude Barlow. I still think of Barlow and the Council of Canadians as a

middle of the road, left-Liberal phenomena. It's easy to take Mel Hurtig and the National Party of Canada to task. He blew a big opportunity to form a very broad coalition on the Left following the killing of the "Charlatan Accord" and during the weak NDP leadership of Audrey McLaughlin. But where were Barlow and the COC in general on "Charlatan" anyway? I can't remember all the details, but it seems to me neither the COC nor the Action Canada Network would follow Hurtig in absolutely rejecting the Charlottetown Accord, and it may have been this failure which prompted the original split between Hurtig and the COC, which he had helped found.

Today, I find many former allies oriented around the Council of Canadians and Citizens Concerned About Free Trade, following the relative demise of the National Party and the ACN, apparently because - at least until recently - the COC has been virtually the "only game in town." But I wonder if this will continue. What is *Briarpatch's* overview of what is happening on the Left and in the popular sector five years after "Charlatan"?

There have been some recent revelations about Millar-Western in Alberta and Saskatchewan. At the same time, I hear there has been a big change in the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, such that the MLTC no longer supports nuclear waste dumping in the La Loche and Ile-a-la-Crosse areas. Could we have an update on this region

(including the latest on the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range?

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# The Empire Strikes Back

*When the Sault This Week hired Robert Roth to be its managing editor, he turned the paper into something more than just a liner for birdcages. That all changed when Conrad Black bought out the newspaper.*

by Rick Palmer

Few people know that there are two Sault Ste. Marie's. One is a city in Michigan with approximately 18,000 people. Directly across the river is the Canadian Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario. It's a city of 85,000. The International Bridge connects both cities.

They have many things in common, including Conrad Black owning the daily newspapers in both cities.

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario did have a weekly newspaper: *Sault This Week*. The publication was similar to advertising weeklies published in other Canadian communities: little news and lots of ads.

Several years ago *STW* decided to become more than a liner for birdcages. They went out and recruited an experienced journalist to be their managing editor and feature columnist. The man they chose was Robert Roth.

Under Roth, *Sault This Week* became a crusading, progressive newspaper. People actually read it and looked forward to each edition. Roth took on local issues and was not afraid of criticizing local bureaucrats and politicians.

Roth took on the local Separate School Board for their handling of a series of sexual abuses committed by a teacher for more than two decades. The teacher is now serving a prison sentence.

Roth was also active on a variety of other issues such as Ontario workfare, hospital health services and the ineffectiveness of civic government. Roth annoyed the establishment but his readers loved him.

His work had an effect on the Conrad Black-owned daily, *The Sault Star*. Amazingly, this newspaper also began to become more progressive on local and provincial issues.

However, things changed quickly in 1997. *Sault This Week* became part of the Conrad Black empire. When this happened,

Roth's enemies began to pressure the publisher and advertisers to mute Roth.

In early April, *STW* suddenly fired Roth. A few days later, more than 150 people gathered in front of the *Sault This Week* office to protest Roth's dismissal.

Publisher Rick Muncaster came out to address the protesters. He claimed he could not comment on the firing because it was in the hands of lawyers.

The rally organizer, Johanna Bischooping of the Concerned Citizen's for Good Government, said "every time a newspaperperson's

voice is silenced it intimidates others. It is a powerful message to silence a voice."



Robert Roth

Later on a local telephone talk show, Roth said, "There is a feudal-like attitude in this city that the peasants have no right to question their feudal lords and it's got to stop. Somebody has got to speak out about it." Roth also went on to say that Muncaster had received boycott threats from the "old boys' club."

The protesters have urged people to telephone the *Sault This Week* and ask that the paper not be delivered

to their homes (it's a free publication). Some have applied "Black Plague" stickers to the newspaper, then returned it to the *STW* office. Others are boycotting the businesses that advertise in the *Sault This Week*.

With Roth's departure from *STW*, *The Sault Star* returned to the pre-Roth format.

Yet not all is doom and gloom in the Sault. A group has formed to create a new, progressive newspaper in the Sault.

*Rick Palmer is a social justice activist living in Sault Ste. Marie.*



# Brazil of the North

*The destruction of Canada's forest is one of the country's best kept secrets.*

by Canada's Future Forest Alliance

**A** recent World Resources Institute report showed that only 20 percent of the world's original forest cover remains today and that most of that forest is in Russia, Canada and Brazil. What's happening in Brazil is occurring with nearly equal devastation in Canada.

Trees logged from Canada's forests in a single year would fill more than 4,300,000 logging trucks. Lined up bumper to bumper, they would extend for 98,000 kilometres; long enough to encircle the world 2 1/2 times.

The destruction of Canada's forest is one of the country's best kept secrets. Do something about it.

For more information contact Canada's Future Forest Alliance, Box 329, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0, phone (250) 358-2333, fax (250) 358-7950, e-mail [vws@web.net](mailto:vws@web.net)

## Brazil

### **size of Brazil**

8.5 million sq. kilometres

### **percentage of Brazil covered by forest**

41 percent

### **hectares/acres of forest cut in Brazil in 1995**

1,113,000 hectares/2,749,000 acres

### **estimated number of Native Indian people in the Amazon forest**

170,000

### **Brazilian forest logged or burned in 1994**

1 acre every 8.6 seconds

## Canada

### **size of Canada**

9.9 million sq. kilometres

### **percentage of Canada covered by forest**

45 percent

### **hectares/acres of forest cut in Canada in 1995**

989,000 hectares/2,442,800 acres

### **estimated number of Native people in Canada's boreal forest**

100,000

### **Canadian forest logged in 1995**

1 acre every 12.9 seconds



# Car Free is Care-Free

*The case for car share co-ops.*

by Shawn Silzer

A car. It represents a lot more than just a means to get from point A to point B. Cars are also about freedom, success and individuality. In Saskatchewan, with this province's vast spaces, it is virtually impossible to imagine life without a car.

But now, in cities throughout Canada and Europe, groups of concerned citizens are challenging the way we use and view our cars, by establishing car share co-ops.

Car share co-ops are an innovative attempt to strike a balance between reducing the environmental impact of car use without compromising any of the convenience of individual car ownership. Quite simply, car share co-ops bring a group of people together to share in the ownership and access to cars. The usual ratio is one car for every ten drivers.

Car sharing is not the same as car pooling - with car pooling, a group of individuals are transported to a common destination at the same time. Car sharing, on the other hand, provides an individual access to a vehicle when other environmentally friendly options - such as walking, cycling or public transportation - do not meet your short-term transportation needs.

The benefits of car share co-ops are many. A study of a German car share co-op showed that 54 percent of the people who joined



the program sold their cars, and another 13 percent deferred a car purchase. Reducing the number of cars on the road increases air quality while reducing traffic and congestion. In fact, a single car can be operated for two years with the same amount of energy it takes to construct a new car. Car share co-ops also eliminate the need to worry about maintenance, servicing or parking hassles.

The way a car share co-op works is simple. Members buy a share in the co-op (at the Canadian car share co-ops, this amounts to about \$500) that is refundable upon leaving the co-op. An annual fee is also paid (between \$35 and \$350, and declining with the amount of usage), and finally, a mileage and hourly rate when you actually use the car.

A telephone call is all it takes to book the date and time you

want the car; the fleet of cars is located in a central location. (In bigger European car share co-ops, there are several locations in the city where you can pick up cars). At the pick up site, a lock box contains the car keys, which are accessed by entry card or key. Pick up your keys, find your car and you're on your way. In most co-ops, cars can be reserved for as little as one-half hour of use.

In Canada, car share co-ops are already established in Quebec and B.C. Two groups in Quebec City and Montreal have a combined total of over 200 members and 24 cars. In Vancouver, the Co-operative Auto Network is about to proceed beyond the pilot project stage, and another car share co-op has just sprung up in Victoria.

In fact, the Victoria group recently received a \$33,000 Environment Canada grant to compile



a how-to guide for other people across Canada who are interested in car share co-ops - including tips on how to set up the required spreadsheets, data bases and billing systems.

Kathy Molloy, who works for the Victoria car share co-op, says their 21 members range from grannies, to young singles, to families. She believes that it is the "stress free" access to a car - no need for insurance, and no more fights with your spouse over whose turn it is to fill the gas tank - which makes the car share co-op so attractive to members.

The idea of car share co-ops makes a lot of sense - and undoubtedly, at one point, we've all told ourselves we'd like to use our cars less. But if you already have a car sitting in the driveway, and you need to get to the grocery store, it's hard to resist the temptation to drive. Other options - like riding a bicycle - become a little less fun in January when it's -40 outside.

But stop to consider the real (and often hidden) costs of owning that car - and those seemingly inconsequential trips to the corner store become a lot more expensive than just the cost of gasoline.

According to a recent article in Toronto's *Now* magazine, the Canadian Automobile Association estimated that in 1995, it cost \$7,700 annually to own and operate a sub-compact car. Not only that, but there are also significant ways that all citizens subsidize the cost of car ownership - such as health care, air pollution, highway and road construction and maintenance, as well as ambulance and police services. Studies indicate that car operating costs would jump by \$5,000 each year if these costs were factored in.

Being a member of a car share co-op, it seems, also reduces car use in another way - by causing members to think twice before using a car. As *Now* magazine observed: "Members still tend to

use their bikes for smaller trips, and also still find transit to be a good choice when available. But late at night, in a blizzard, or on the weekend when transit service diminishes, the share car is an attractive option for many."

European studies cited by the Co-operative Auto Network in Vancouver report that co-op members reduce their car use as much as 50 percent without any reduction in mobility or convenience.

In Europe, car sharing has been growing steadily since 1990, and now some 200 car share organizations exist in Swiss, German and Dutch communities, with a fleet of about 1,000 cars serving about 15,000 users.

A German study found that car sharing is best suited to those who drive between 5,000 and 10,000 km per year. According to *The Week In Germany*, if everyone in Germany who fell into this category were to join a car share co-op, "there would be 1.2 million fewer cars on Germany's roads."

While one German car share co-op owns more than 100 cars,

most own less than ten. And the European experience proves that the prospect of not getting a car when you want one is not an issue - Europeans have estimated that the average chance of not getting a car on a chosen date and time is less than ten percent.

With some car share co-ops, both in Canada and Europe, you also get the option of booking the car most suited to your particular needs - if it's a moving weekend, you can book a van or truck; the next time, you can reserve a smaller car for a weekend getaway.

Taking the idea one step further, some car share co-ops are now investigating the idea of targeting their services to commuters, by having car pick up and drop off points located outside train stations. Another future prospect is to have small battery-powered two seater cars scattered at points throughout the city, which could be accessed by members and driven from one collection point to the next.

*Shawn Silzer is a Regina-based provincial civil servant.*

# Pro-Choice Rally

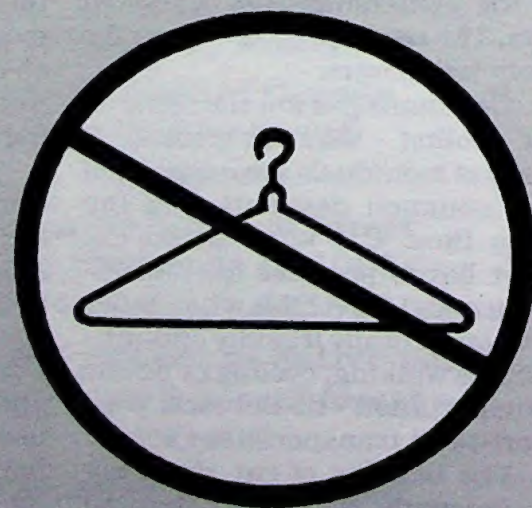
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entertainment.

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# Saskatchewan's Training Strategy

*Does the provincial government have the political will to ensure that there are jobs for all who are able and wish to work?*

by Liz Quinlan

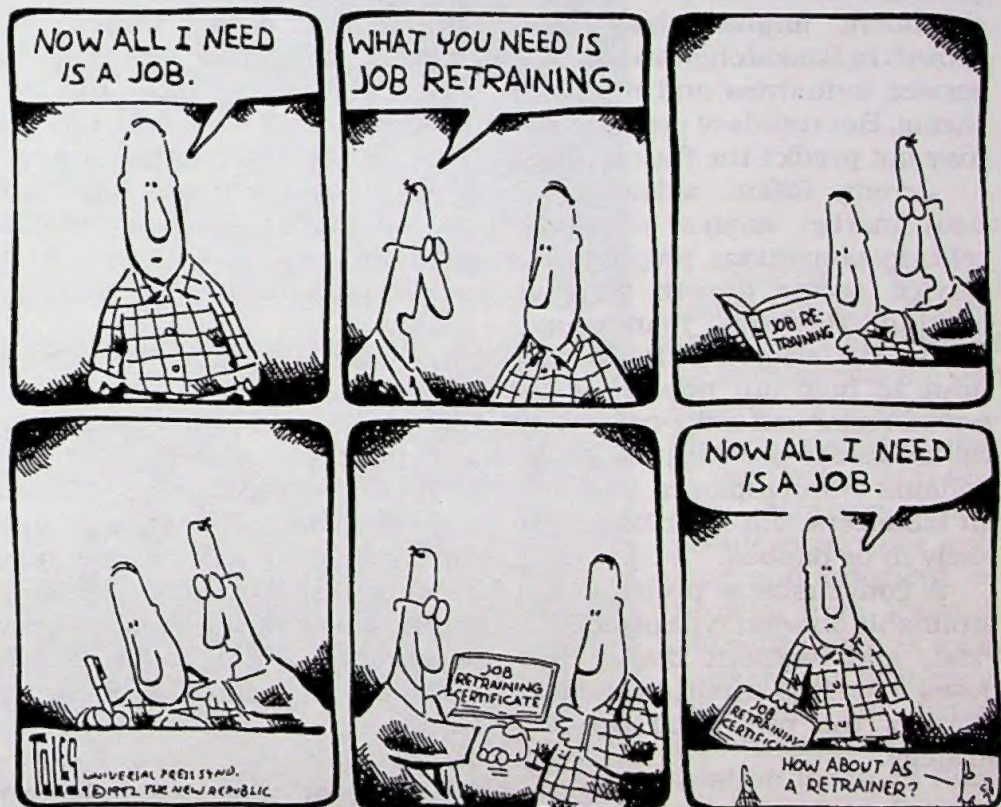
**E**arlier this spring, after a year of consultations, the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training released a document called *Saskatchewan Training Strategy: Bridges to Employment*. Like all government policy, the strategy will have profound ramifications for residents of the province - training is generally seen as a critical filter in selecting students for opportunities in the work-force; those who have access to programs increase their chances of finding employment.

However, the document offers little insight as to just what these ramifications will be. The document is filled with political rhetoric, which is unimaginative at best, and deceptive at worst.

For example, the three overriding goals are given as: 1) developing a skilled work-force relevant to Saskatchewan's labour market, 2) enhancing access and support opportunities for all learners, and 3) creating a coherent and effective delivery system.

Who could possibly disagree with the motherhood statements of the second and third goals? Effectiveness is something citizens expect of all government programs, whether they be training, health care or road maintenance. While the last two goals clearly lack substance, the first is a minefield of hidden assumptions.

In order to develop a skilled work-force which is relevant to Saskatchewan's labour market, one



must first anticipate certain characteristics about the province's future labour market. What type of jobs will exist, what skills will be necessary in order to perform them, and what skills are already held by the work-force?

Although the questions seem obvious, the answers are less so. In recent times, economic forecasts have lost a certain degree of credibility, with economists often characterized as failed meteorologists. This may be due, only in part, to faulty predictions. Economists' often undeclared political allegiances offer additional grounds

for the public's skepticism.

## What type of jobs will exist?

The architects of the *Training Strategy* claim that by the year 2000 there will be ten percent more training opportunities in Saskatchewan compared to 1996. With the provincial government now having to replace federal cuts to apprenticeship and adult basic education programs, the total provincial investment is said to translate into 8,500 new places in training and employment programs. Although the authors hint at some kind of complementary



job creation strategy, there is little assurance that the 8,500 newly trained people will have jobs to go to.

Aren't these bureaucrats aware of the record-breaking unemployment rates and the significant growth in part-time, contract and other non-standard employment? Job creation policies have failed to have much effect on the problem of mass unemployment.

By presenting historical data on the change in employment in various economic sectors over the past decade in the province, the document implies that future growth in Saskatchewan will be in service industries and manufacturing. But trends of past decades may not predict the future well.

Jeremy Rifkin, a leading labour market analyst of almost celebrity proportions, proposes that service sector growth will not continue. He writes, "many economists and elected officials continue to hold out hope that the service sector and white-collar work will be able to provide jobs for the millions of unemployed blue-collar labourers, but their hopes are likely to be dashed."

A consensus is probably not attainable on what type of jobs will exist, and, without doubt, this poses a serious threat to the viability of the provincial training strategy.

### **Skills for the jobs of the future**

The lack of consensus on what type of jobs will exist in the future spills over into the analysis of skill requirements. The authors of the document imply that the new jobs will require increasing levels of skill and knowledge. But, there are also some who disagree with the notion that skill requirements are shifting upward.

For example, Gordon Betcherman, author of many Canadian labour market reports, has concluded that "while it is probably true that aggregate skill requirements are increasing, it is simply not true that all of the job creation

in the new economy will require high levels of education and training."

It's important to distinguish between skills which are required to do the job and skills which are required to get the job. Few would argue that higher education levels are being asked of job seekers. But are those qualifications needed in order to perform those jobs?

Although there is a common perception that a striking number of Canadian adults can't meet most everyday reading demands and do not have adequate numeracy skills to deal with printed material requiring a simple sequence of numerical operations, the few studies which have carefully examined the educational requirements for current jobs have concluded that the majority of jobs actually need less than a high school diploma in order to get the job done.

Closer to home, of the recently surveyed participants of the new Saskatchewan Future Skills training program, almost one-third thought that the training program did not make a difference in their ability to get a job because they already had the skills necessary for the job. It appears that the jury is still out on the question of what skills are needed for the jobs of the future.

### **Linking training to the labour market**

The *Training Strategy* implies that the provision of training will no longer be the preserve of the provincial government, but will now be a joint effort of public institutions in partnership with industry. This proposition should set off alarm bells in the ears of all who are involved in training programs in the province.

First, the record casts doubt on industry's commitment to training. A recent Conference Board of Canada survey indicates that 70 percent of Canadian businesses considered illiteracy a problem for their operation, yet only 24 per-

cent had a specific policy to deal with the problem.

The National Advisory Board on Science and Technology has identified that "only one-third of Canadian companies provide any training to employees at all," putting Canada far behind most other OECD countries in the percentage of gross wages and salaries spent on employer-sponsored training. Since it inevitably means some sacrifice to profits, how realistic is it to count on industry to play a role in training?

Second, acquiring skills, especially those needed for high-tech jobs, requires understanding the underlying concepts - there are just too many details to consider them in a disjointed way. It's not enough to know only the sequence of which buttons to push, because the sequence is bound to change. Placing such details in a conceptual framework allows the skills to be first, attainable and second, transferable. Emphasizing transferable skills seems necessary in light of the general level of unpredictability in the labour market. But, can we reasonably expect an employer to invest in training which will increase the chances for employees to find other jobs with other employers?

Linking training to employment, as the *Training Strategy* proposes to do, is a case of trying to pin the tail on the donkey - but worse, the tailless donkey is no-madic!

Aside from the question of whether labour market demands should guide training policy, such an approach could only be possible if we lived in a planned economy, and there was the political will to ensure that there are jobs for all who are able and wish to work.

*Liz Quinlan is an instructor in adult basic education, and is just finishing her Master's degree in mathematics education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education / University of Toronto.*



# Challenging Poverty in the West

*Some practical ideas to end the "poverty industry."*

by Debbie Culbertson

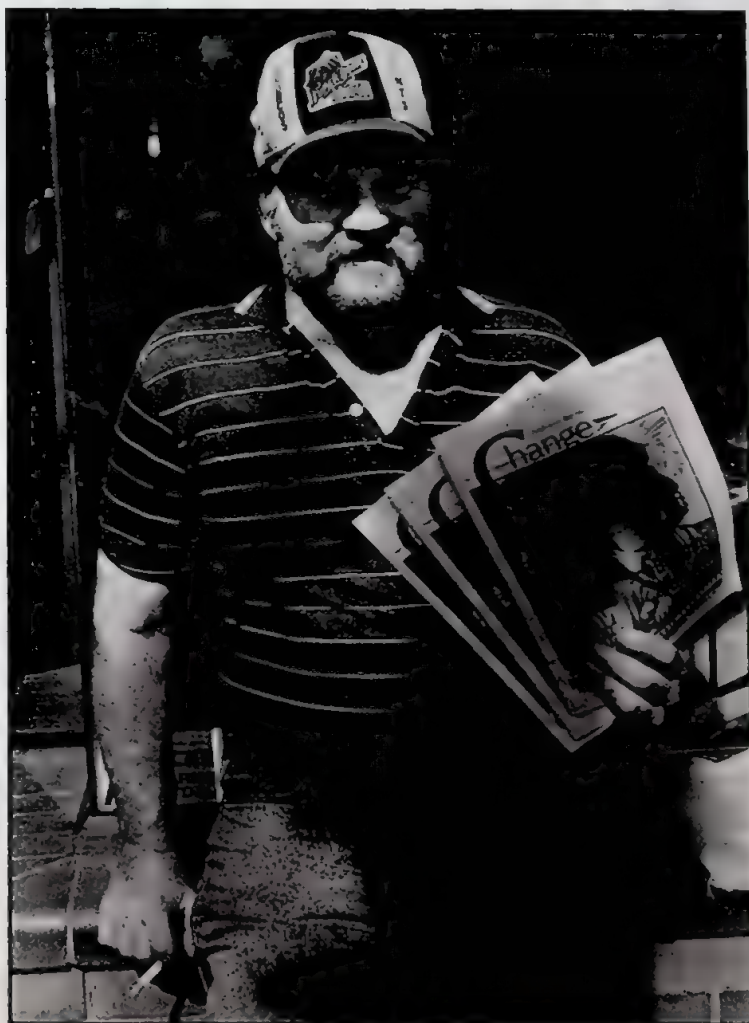
**"P**oor people are experts on poverty," said former BC MLA Rosemary Brown, the keynote speaker at the Western Canada Poor People's Conference, held May 22-25. According to organizers, the purpose of the conference was to enable people living on low incomes to identify their own solutions to poverty and put those solutions into action. Over 200 people from across western Canada attended the Edmonton event.

One of the "experts on poverty" that Brown was addressing was Ann Janzen, a conference participant. "My definition of poverty is when the jewelry you always thought would be family heirlooms have to be sold for food," says Janzen, a single mother living on social assistance.

Janzen was not always poor. She left a well-paying job in a rural community in order to avoid further attacks from a violent husband. Today she lives in a low income neighbourhood in Win-

nipeg with her daughter and four-year-old grandson.

Janzen says that one of the more difficult challenges she faces is harassment from welfare workers. "They're always trying to find out if we're living with a man so they can cut us off welfare," says Janzen.



Only homeless people can sell *Spare Change* in Vancouver.

photo: Elaine Brière

Bonnie Morton knows just how demoralizing such experiences are to those who live with poverty. According to Morton, staff associate at the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry, poor people experience criticism and judgment, especially from those in authority such as social workers and politicians. Provincial and federal governments enact legislation (such as finger printing those living on social assistance) that threat poor people as though they are criminals.

Only one to three percent of people living on social assistance commit welfare fraud," Morton said. "By comparison, the rate of income tax fraud is ten percent. Yet governments don't go after tax cheaters in the same way they police those living on social assistance."

During a workshop on poor-bashing, Morton pointed out that welfare policing costs a lot of money



## A Snapshot of Poverty in Western Canada

- One in seven households in Alberta are either homeless, at risk of being homeless or among the "invisible homeless." (Edmonton Social Planning Council)
- One in six British Columbians used Income Assistance in 1994 (End Legislated Poverty)
- In 1995, the child poverty rate in Edmonton reached 27 percent. (Poverty Profile 1995, National Council of Welfare)
- In Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, on-reserve Registered Indians have incomes averaging below \$10,000 (Sounding the Alarm: Poverty in Canada, 1996)
- Percentage of those who live in poverty by province: 17.6 percent in Manitoba, 17.4 percent in Alberta, 16.3 percent in Saskatchewan and 16.9 percent in British Columbia. (Poverty Profile 1995, National Council of Welfare)

- money that could be better spent helping rather than demeaning those who are forced to live on assistance. A former welfare recipient herself, Morton mobilizes other poor people to lobby government for positive social and economic reforms. "Poverty is created by political decisions and by the implementation of policies," Morton said. "We have to challenge the situations that cause poverty."

For members of Food Not Bombs, the solution to poverty is simple. "End capitalism," said Sarah Fox of the Winnipeg chapter. Her group distributes food to over 50 poor and homeless people each week. Fox believes that the moment that profits are made from the buying and selling of food, then some people will inevitably go hungry.

Her analysis was echoed by Rosemary Brown. "Poverty is an industry," says Brown. A system of organizations and businesses - from prisons to pawn brokers - profit from those living on low incomes, says the long-time anti-poverty activist.

Many conference participants



Bonnie Morton

had practical ideas to end the "poverty industry." Bill, a single father of four, goes to an Edmonton employment agency each day to find jobs as a casual labourer. His work involves tasks as diverse as chipping paint off walls to carrying 90 pound boxes of siding.

The agency collects \$9.75 per hour from the employer for Bill's work, but pays him only \$6 an hour. The \$3.75 an hour is the agency's fee for finding him employment.

"Why can't we form a poor person's union?" asks Bill. Poor people could donate \$1 per hour from their wages to pay someone to coordinate a job centre. This would leave \$8.75 for the person who actually did the job.

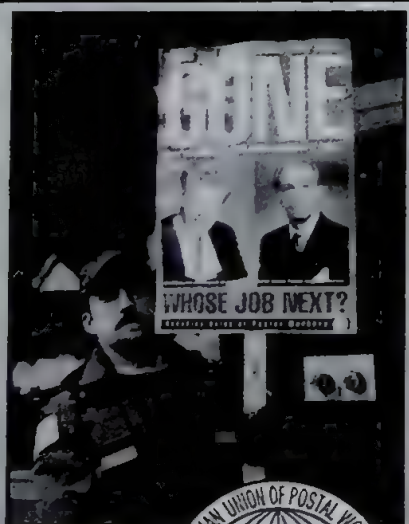
"Unless we connect with each other and help each other, nothing's going to change," said Pam Coates of the National Anti-Poverty Organization, one of the final conference speakers. As the conference ended, clusters of people discussed ways they wanted to follow Coates' advice when they return to their home provinces.

*Debbie Culbertson is an Alberta freelance writer and editor.*

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Regina Local



# Youth Crime

## *Are jails and work camps the solution?*

by Rob Gates

**C**onservative leader Jean Charest claims Canadians have been telling him for years that the justice system is too soft on young criminals. He wants to ensure they "get the punishment they deserve." A central plank in his party's platform is to ensure "no young person should be able to choose to be idle and still receive full EI benefits." Charest is offering more policing and workfare as a solution to a perceived lack of morals and motivation among young people.

Youth workfare is not a new idea. The NDP government in B.C. has recently employed this approach to "motivate" poor youth. The B.C. government has restricted welfare eligibility for youth and replaced it with workfare.

In January 1996, Saskatchewan premier Roy Romanow proposed workfare and "learnfare" for youth. Young adults whose parents can afford to support them would be thrown off welfare, and those young people who can't turn to their parents would have to work or go to school to maintain benefits.

Recently a group of Miller High School students in Regina who call themselves the Young Offenders Advisory Group, added their voices to the call to crack down on youth. They circulated a petition for the federal government to lower the age at which offenders are treated as adults from 18 to 16 years, and to increase the maximum sentence for murder for youth from 10 to 15 years.

Provincial Liberal justice critic



Jack Hillson was quick to applaud the students for recommending young offenders do community work if they couldn't afford to pay restitution through the courts (as if this were not already common practice).

Stiffer punishments and amendments to the age limits of the Young Offenders Act has long been a rallying cry of the Reform Party. One audience member at a Yorkton town hall meeting held by three Reform MPs in June 1994 said, "I'm sick and tired of 30 days or \$30, I want to hear 30 days or 30 lashes."

And then there was the attempt by City Councillors in Saskatoon last summer to revive a 60-year-old curfew bylaw which threatened to throw kids under 15 into a children's shelter or fine their parents if they are found on the street after 10:00 p.m.

Why all the excitement about

youth and youth crime? Are youth more prone to criminal activity, or more in need of "motivation" than they used to be?

According to a poll by *Maclean's* magazine, 76 percent of Canadians think so. They feel the behaviour of young people is "now worse or much worse" than it was a decade ago. It is noteworthy that while crime among youth did not increase measurably between 1993-1994, since 1995 anxiety and fear about this "problem" has increased across Canada, and calls for courts to get tougher have grown louder.

It is worth observing as well that the Miller High School students were reacting to what they perceived as a negative stereotype of youth. As one student put it, "We're trying to save our reputations as young people."

No doubt media attention to the more sensationalistic cases of crimes by youth, and recurrent



reference to "youth gangs" contribute to the anti-youth hysteria. Printing these stories sells newspapers after all, and they cater to the privileged, middle class sensibility that greatly fears loss of order and property.

Youth - as a relatively voiceless, powerless group - are easy scapegoats. Politicians like to target them as a means to individualize social problems and detract attention from real problems like unemployment and poverty. Otherwise they would have to admit that youth need jobs to go to in order to work.

According to a Statistics Canada report released in March of this year, the official unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 climbed to 17.8 percent, nearly double the overall rate. The employment rate for youth now stands at only 51 percent, which means nearly one-half of youth in this country are unemployed or have given up looking for work. The number of youth who have never had a job doubled from one in ten in 1989 to one in five today.

The federal Liberals gave lip service in their recent election campaign to provide jobs for youth, and they continue to subsidize the private sector to create them, a plan that clearly does not work. Since the Liberals came to power the number of jobs for youth has decreased by over 45,000. When jobs are available, they tend to be part-time, low-wage and low security - the number of youth working part-time has jumped from 21 percent in 1989 to 50 percent in 1997. With this we can anticipate the consequences of the Liberal promise to throw another \$15 million over the next three years to the Canadian Tourism Commission to subsidize service sector restaurant jobs. Youth need real, decent paying jobs to go to.

While higher education increases the chances of securing employment, the Liberals have also cut funding to post-secondary education, thus driving up tuition

fees. The average student debt load for a university education in 1990 was \$8,700; by 1998 it is expected to be \$25,000. The rate of summer employment to pay for these tuition increases fell from 69 percent in 1989 to 52 percent currently.

And high unemployment means high levels of poverty. Under the present Liberal government an additional 700,000 people fell below the poverty line. In 1991 official figures indicate 18.3 percent of Canadian children were living in poverty. In 1995 the number grew to 20.5 percent, which is more than 1.4 million children.

According to the 1997 Alternative Federal Budget, approximately 57.6 percent of single young men under 25 live in poverty; for women the figure is 71.4 percent. For single mothers the figure leaps to 89.6 percent.

Back to official figures, in Regina children under seven years of age had a poverty rate of 27 percent in 1993, and the poverty rate for single parent families in Regina was consistently high at 65 percent.

High levels of unemployment and poverty also mean higher levels of stress and anxiety for youth. Psychological studies invariably conclude that self-esteem, depression and mental health are significantly higher among unemployed as compared to employed youth.

Macro-level analysis of the United States suggests that for every one percent increase in the unemployment rate there is a parallel increase of 4.1 percent in

the suicide rate, 5.7 percent in the murder rate, 3.4 percent in infant mortality, 4 percent in incarceration, and a 3.3 percent increase in first time admission to a mental hospital.

It should not surprise us then that poor youth face diminished life-chances. A Statistics Canada report released in April this year confirmed that poor children do more poorly in school and have a greater risk of dropping out than children who are better off financially. Canada's poorest children are more than three times as likely as the richest children to be in remedial classes. For 16 and 17 year olds, only 5 percent of the "non-poor" drop out of high school compared to about 12.5 percent of the poor.

As the chairperson for the Senate Committee reporting on child poverty in 1991 pointed out, "Socio-economic class continues to be the greatest single barrier to opportunity."

If we look at the evidence on youth and youth crime, the message is clear. Society and governments must provide more financial and social support to parents, children and schools. The repetitious, knee-jerk refrain to "lock'em up" by law-and-order politicians and self-righteous citizens represents a lack of understanding

and a heartless response to a crisis situation for youth. The exploitation of youth is political as well as economic, yet neither public sympathy nor political action to reverse the situation is likely so long as youth continue to be seen as personally responsible for their plight.

*Rob Gates is completing his MA thesis in Social Studies at the University of Regina.*

Youth are easy  
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## *Who will pay the price for Eaton's bankruptcy?*

by David Robinson

**F**or one prominent commentator, it was as if a Canadian dream had been shattered. After 127 years in business, the once venerable Eaton's chain of department stores filed for bankruptcy protection earlier this spring.

The announcement sent a minor shockwave through some circles where the news was greeted with both stoic resignation and romantic nostalgia. Retail analysts shrugged off Eaton's woes with reference to bad marketing and cutthroat competition, while myth-makers likened the nation's collective mood to Canada's first loss to the Soviets in the legendary 1972 hockey series.

For the nostalgic among us, it is true that Eaton's has had a special relationship with Canadians. In many smaller communities, unlike big-box retailers Wal-Mart and Home Depot, Eaton's is the centre of the downtown core. For many of us, the store is perhaps best remembered for the annual Santa Claus parades it staged, while earlier generations may fondly recall Eaton's multi-use mail-order catalogue.

Of course, lost in both the cold business rhetoric and poetic reflection about the fate of Eaton's, lie the real blemishes of the company - its virulent anti-unionism, Lady Eaton's public praise of Italian fascism, Conrad Black's presence of the Board of Direc-

tors, and the family's undesirable influence over the nation's political affairs.

Whatever image we may hold about Eaton's today, however, there are more defining symbols lurking behind the retail giant's demise. In truth, the story of Eaton's bankruptcy speaks volumes about the changing economic conditions of our times, conditions in which those who can least afford it are being asked to pay the biggest price.

At first blush, Eaton's bankruptcy appears so dramatic because it was not long ago that the family's department stores had a stranglehold on the retail industry in Canada. Eaton's was the country's fourth largest private employer, nudged out only by the two railroads and Bell Canada. Just 20 years ago, the company controlled nearly half of all merchandise sales in Canada.

Eaton's dominance of the industry stemmed from the way it changed the nature of retail when it burst onto the scene in 1869. Founder Timothy Eaton introduced what were then two new radical ideas - cash sales and fixed prices, in contrast to the credit and barter system in place at the time.

With these and other innovations, Eaton's prospered because it was able to take advantage of a changing Canadian economy. In a way, Eaton's and



other department stores applied the same principles of modern manufacturing to the retail sector. Just as the auto maker Henry Ford recognized that industry could not expand if it simply supplied products for a limited upper class market, so too Timothy Eaton and his counterparts marketed their stores for the emerging "middle class consumers" - an amorphous category that at one time seemed to include everyone. This strategy was nicely summed up in an early Eaton's ad which claimed the store is "one of the best sights in the city where goods are all marked in plain figures and sold at one price to rich and poor alike." In the end, the growth of the middle class and the growth of department stores went hand in hand.

The success of Eaton's department stores, however, came at the expense of smaller independent merchants. In fact, toward the end of the last century, Eaton's became the object of protests and political pressure as those displaced by the new department stores waged a failed campaign against further expansion.

Ironically, Eaton's today has itself become the latest victim of changes to the retail sector. Simpson's, Woodwards, Robinson's, Woolworth, Kresge, and Metropolitan have all passed away since 1991. Why? Department stores prospered only so long as the middle class prospered. Today, however, retail success is no longer tied to wooing middle class consumers, because the middle class is rapidly disappearing. As the gaps between rich and poor widen, the industry too has become increasingly polarized. At one end, there are the giant discount superstores like Wal-Mart and Zellers which target the cash-strapped consumer plagued by economic insecurity and double-digit unemployment. At the other end, are the upscale specialty stores which tailor to a small but wealthy elite cashing in on a booming stock market and rising corporate profits.

Department stores like Eaton's really are products of a different era, but who pays the biggest price for the Eaton's bankruptcy isn't the company's creditors or even the Eaton family - although George Eaton did recently have to sell his \$5 million mansion in Toronto's ritzy Forest Hill neighbourhood. Despite this sacrifice, prior to the bankruptcy, the Eaton's had the good sense to see the danger signs and shuffled their assets by purchasing the CTV television network - setting their sights on a new industry to conquer.

In the case of Eaton's, as with other tales of corporate failure, it's the employees who are bearing the heaviest burden. Many of them face immediate lay-off as seven stores are shut this summer and another 11 will be closed early next year. And to rub salt into the wounds, employees could also see their pension funds raided. Just weeks after filing for bankruptcy protection, Eaton's announced it wanted to grab a \$154 million surplus from its employee

pension plan to pay off some of the estimated \$300 million it owes its creditors.

Wealthy investment dealers, on the other hand, were quick to cover their interests when the bankruptcy was announced. CIBC Wood Gundy fretted that funds it controls on behalf of Eaton's credit card operations might be targeted by cash-hungry creditors. Wood Gundy immediately went to court and won a ruling that protects the \$333 million fund.

Eaton's employees have other things to worry about. Upon hearing of the department store's financial woes, dozens of creditors sold their claims on money owed to them to U.S. "vulture funds." Like corporate predators in a cannibalistic feeding frenzy, vulture funds buy outstanding debt claims at a discount from creditors who need the cash up front. That gives the funds a privilege employees should have but can only dream of - a seat at the table when it comes time to design a restructuring blueprint for the company. Not surprisingly, the vulture funds are more concerned about making a short-term profit on their investments than with preserving the jobs of Eaton's employees.

The other losers are the scores of communities across the country in which Eaton's will close. Eaton's, with all its warts, was nevertheless the centre of many downtown cores, attracting jobs and foot traffic to town centres. With the department store closing, however, shoppers will be flocking to the suburban big-box retailers like U.S.-based Wal-Mart. For many smaller communities still smarting from the recession, it will mean even harder times ahead for local downtown merchants.

In the end, Eaton's is a victim of the so-called "new economy." Just as Timothy Eaton once drove the stake through the heart of many smaller merchants, now the modern company has fallen prey to bigger and even nastier corporate forces. But lest we shed a tear for the Eaton family, it is worth remembering just who will pay the final tab for the department store's bankruptcy.

*David Robinson is the research and communications coordinator with The Council of Canadians.*



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Drugs, money, laundering  
and Canadian banks

## The Canadian CONNECTION

photo: George Manz

by Asad Ismi

**R**ecently, media attention has focused on Mexico's drug traffickers and the "threat" they pose to Canada and the United States. This follows revelations that General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, the head of Mexico's National Institute for Combatting Drugs, has been in the pay of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, Mexico's most wanted drug lord, for the last seven years.

Mexico is thus seen as a country on the verge of being taken over by drug cartels which have thoroughly corrupted the state. After conquering Mexico, the cartels will presumably "corrupt" North American institutions. However, on the issue of drugs, it is the North which is corrupting the South, not the other way around.

To begin with, the Mexican cartels are fulfilling the demands of millions of North American drug users. As *The Economist* magazine puts it: "the iron law of the market is that demand breeds supply."

Northern economic policies towards the South encourage drug trafficking by debilitating their legal

economies. Northern financial institutions benefit far more from drug money than any Southern trafficker.

Structural Adjustment Programs imposed on Peru by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (both of which are U.S.-dominated) pushed four million people into extreme poverty, almost halved real wages, and cut those with "adequate employment" to 15 percent of the work-force. Consequently, there has been a forced migration of impoverished peasants and urban unemployed into coca growing as an alternative to starvation.

In 1991, in exchange for \$100 million from the United States, Peru put in place the IMF "structural adjustment" clause opening its markets to U.S. corn. As a result, by 1995, corn cultivation had fallen tenfold and coca production had grown by 50 percent.

### Money Laundering

Narco-corruption in North America is most significantly manifested in money laundering. Ninety-



one percent of the \$197 billion spent on cocaine in the U.S. stays there, and American banks launder \$100 billion of drug money every year. Those identified as money laundering conduits include the Bank of Boston, Republic National Bank of New York, Landmark First National Bank, Great American Bank, People's Liberty Bank and Trust Co. of Kentucky, and Riggs National Bank of Washington.

Citibank helped Raul Salinas (the brother of former Mexican president Carlos Salinas) move millions of dollars out of Mexico into secret Swiss bank accounts under false names. Swiss authorities have declared that this money (which totals \$100 million) consists of payments from drug traffickers to Salinas, and are preparing to seize it.

In 1993, two directors at the American Express Bank International (AEBI) in Beverly Hills, California wired drug money from Juan Garcia Abrego - the Mexican cocaine baron arrested and extradited to the United States in January 1996 - from the First City Texas Bank in McAllen, Texas to accounts in the Manhattan branch of Banker's Trust of New York. AEBI then invested the money in London, Switzerland, Mexico and Houston.

In addition, Manufacturers Hanover, Chase Manhattan Bank, Chemical Bank and Irving Trust have admitted not reporting money transfers to the U.S. government (the Bank Secrecy Act of 1970 requires that all transactions over \$10,000 be reported). The Bank of America has been fined \$4.75 million for not revealing transfers of more than \$12 billion.

The U.S. Treasury Department has penalized 25 banks for failure to report and in April 1990, hundreds of accounts in 173 banks were frozen by court order. The accounts were suspected of hiding almost \$400 million in Colombian drug profits.

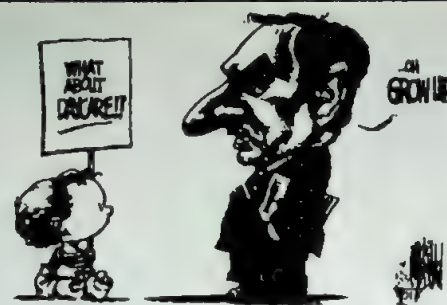
Investment houses such as Merrill Lynch and EF Hutton have also handled millions of dollars in drug money (putting it in the New York bullion market).

### **The Canadian Connection**

In September 1989, it was revealed that Canadian banks have been laundering drug money on an enormous scale. Notorious in this regard is the Bank of Nova Scotia (BNS) which has laundered \$100 million in drug money through its Miami and Caribbean branches. The money was sent to the BNS' Bahamas and Cayman Islands branches from Miami and then wired to its New York office where the funds could be withdrawn by the original depositors.

In 1981 and 1983, U.S. authorities subpoenaed records of the Bahamas and Cayman Islands BNS branches in connection with two investigations of drug trafficking. The bank gave up the documents only after being fined \$1.8 million for delaying their release. BNS asked no questions about large cash deposits, ignored normal banking practices, and hid

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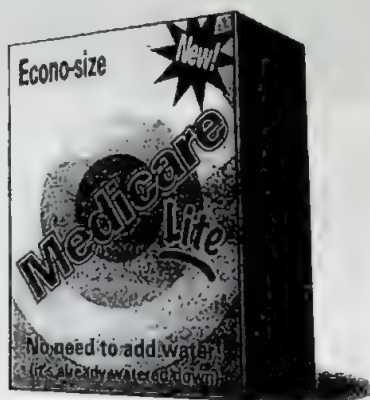
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its depositor's identities by keeping minimal records. Also, BNS employees in the Caribbean were given thousands of dollars in "tips" by their clients for their "understanding."

Similarly, \$726,000 in drug profits has been deposited in the Royal Bank of Canada. In 1989 the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) identified the Swiss Bank Corporation (Canada) as "a repository of \$14 million in drug money."

Sales of narcotics generate approximately \$10 billion a year in Canada and most of this is washed through Canadian banks and other legitimate businesses. While money laundering is a crime in Canada, just as it is in the U.S., bank reporting requirements in Canada are voluntary. Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are included in the DEA's list of the 18 most prominent money laundering centres in the world.

### Narco-corruption

Narco-corruption in North America is widespread amongst public officials as well. Sixty policemen in Miami have been identified as corrupt and 80 lawmen and public officials in Georgia have been charged with serious offenses such as accepting bribes. A Georgia state senator promised to protect drug smugglers if they contributed to his campaign for the governorship.

Thirty-two U.S. law enforcement officials including Customs agents have been indicted for "border-related corruption" which is "systemic and pervasive" according to the FBI. Two-thirds of the cocaine coming into the U.S. does so at official entry points along the Mexican frontier.

In Miami, three FBI agents and one from Customs were charged with stealing \$200,000 from drug dealers in 1994. A former senior Justice Department official and two former prosecutors were indicted in June 1995 on charges of helping Colombian drug barons in a criminal conspiracy.

Kendall Coffey, the U.S. attorney for Southern Florida, stated that the latter case showed "the degree to which cocaine profits have corrupted the legal system." When the FBI tried to prosecute World Finance Corporation (an international lending company) for laundering drug money, the Bureau was reportedly informed by an Internal Revenue Service agent that "WFC was a legitimate company; if it dealt in drug money so much the better; narcotics money that stayed in the U.S. was good for the economy."

*Asad Ismi is a research associate at the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice and a member of CAPA (Canada-Americas Policy Alternatives) Working Group which is affiliated to the Centre. He is co-author of CAPA's "Report on Canada's Sixth year in the OAS: Focus on Corruption" from which parts of this article are excerpted.*





# Parson Manning

## and the Politics of Hate

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*The undertaker comes calling.*

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by J. F. Conway

Tory leader Jean Charest once commented that Parson Manning "is planning Canada's funeral...vying for the position of Canada's number-one undertaker." That is just about the only meaningful political comment that Mulroney's apprentice in political puffery and deceit ever uttered.

Well, western Canadians have now invited the undertaker into the parlour and more serious discussions will begin about coffin size and quality, burial plots, and variations on the order for the burial of the dead. All this will be a bit unseemly, since the corpse is not yet dead. But Parson Manning is willing to add to his roles, volunteering to play Doctor Death and put Canada quickly out of its misery.

The 1997 election will be duly recorded in Canadian history as *the* watershed election of this century. Two



great contradictions of the Canadian political economy - which Canadian politics has tortuously avoided through elaborate constitutional and ideological dances, as well as the smoke and mirrors of astute political manipulators - have suddenly confronted us in a brutal manner, denying further evasions and equivocations.

First, there's the central ideological contradiction of capitalism - do humans serve the market and those who command it; or can we build a social structure that puts human beings and their needs first? The Reform Party and Parson Manning are telling us that we are enslaved to the market and to capitalism. Manning would impose the simple fundamentals of business morality on all aspects of Canadian life. The free market and the corporate balance sheet are the Holy Grail in the good Parson's version of secular evangelical Christianity. As the other parties succumbed to the neoconservative agenda, the Parson became increasingly more demanding, pushing the political debate ever rightward. And the other parties, including the NDP, rather than fighting toe-to-toe for the ideological terrain, retreated, echoing deficit and debt hysteria, worshipping the rule of the market, and abjectly submitting to the ruling corporate elite. This was probably best epitomized in Saskatchewan by the spectacle of NDP cabinet ministers sharing the platform with the extreme right, and pandering to the lies and distortions of the gun lobby, the shock troops of the right.

Second, there's the Quebec question. Parson Manning intends to drive Quebec out of Canada, since he can never be prime minister of a Canada that includes Quebec. Manning's own right-hand man in building the Reform Party, Tom Flanagan, in his book *Waiting for the Wave*, admits that the two scenarios most likely to lead to a Reform victory include either an economic catastrophe, or, more likely, a constitutional crisis provoked by Quebec's separation. It's no accident that Manning attacked Quebec repeatedly during the election - with the inevitable result of re-invigorating the support for the flagging Bloc Québécois. In response to the 1997 result, premier Bouchard's comment, half an expression of hope and half a prophecy, was ominous: "[This is] the last federal election in Quebec."

Again, rather than confronting Reform's anti-Quebec stance, and Manning's deliberate provocations of Quebec in an effort to cultivate and exacerbate the latent hostility for Quebec in English Canada, the other parties scrambled to prove that they

too were tough enough to keep Quebec in line.

Aware that love of the social Darwinism of the unfettered free market and hatred for Quebec are together not enough to win sufficient support from Canadians, the Parson has groped around in the murky sludge of Canadian politics in order to cobble



together a coalition based on the politics of hate, fear and resentment. He has succeeded beyond his own or anyone else's expectations: stirring up western sectional anger; anti-Quebec animosity; anti-immigrant and anti-aboriginal sentiments; fear and hatred of crime and criminals. So you get one person voting Reform because of hatred for Quebec, another because of western alienation, another because of devotion to evangelical Christianity, another because of a desire to hang murderers, another because of a hatred for feminism, another because of hatred of gays and lesbians, another to keep his gun, another to put aboriginals in their place, another to keep visible immigrants out. Manning is convinced there are enough angry threads of the single issue politics of resentment and hate that, when joined with far-right ideology, will be enough to win power.

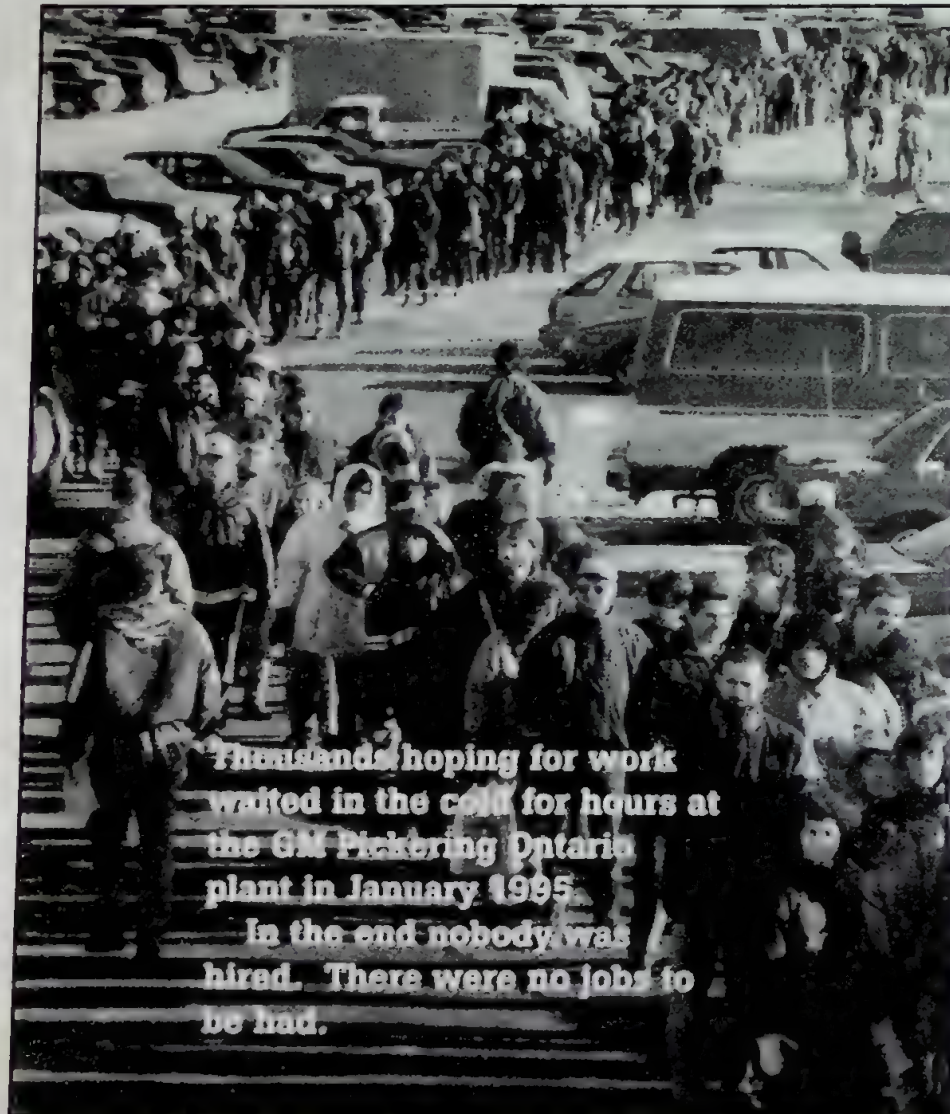
When Manning started his quest in 1988, he was ridiculed and dismissed. In 1993, many hoped his breakthrough would be temporary and most politicians and parties tried to undercut him by stealing his neoconservative rhetoric and policies.

In 1997, it is clear that Manning will not just quietly disappear into the historical woodwork as a curiosity of western Canadian politics. Parson Manning will have to be confronted and politically defeated, vote by vote, riding by riding.

*J.F. Conway is a sociologist at the University of Regina and a Trustee on the Regina Public School Board.*



# The NDP stuck to the issues of jobs and the economy.



The CLC wishes to offer congratulations to Alexa McDonough and the NDP campaign team for running a successful election campaign by sticking to the real issues that affect working people and those who want to work. Special congratulations for those responsible for defeating Doug Young, the former federal Labour Minister.



Prairie Region



# Reform's Victory

*Reform expected a major breakthrough in the East and to elbow the Tories off the Canadian political stage. They failed on both accounts.*

by Ellen Gould

If you read the Conrad Black press, you might get the impression that the June election was a tremendous victory for Reform because it became the official opposition. You might also be feeling crushed by a Reform tide if you're from Saskatchewan, where Reform picked up most of its new seats.

In fact, Reform already would have been the official opposition at the end of the last parliament if two of its caucus members - Jan Brown and Stephen Harper - had not quit. Gaining official opposition party status in the next parliament will put somewhat more of a spotlight on Reform, but the English media had already been doing that while all but ignoring the Bloc Québécois. Since Reformers express contempt for the workaday role of parliamentarians, they are unlikely to become fascinated with legislative work just because they have gained official opposition status.

No, what this election was supposed to be about for Reform was a breakthrough in the East, for the party to establish itself as a nation-wide force and to elbow the Progressive Conservatives off the Canadian political stage. They failed in both objectives.

Manning staked a lot of his own personal prestige in convincing the party to expand into Ontario, overriding objections from those who wanted Reform



to remain a pure voice of western protest. In the 1997 election, Manning ran a go-for-broke campaign described as "brilliant" by his media cheering section.

How brilliant it was can be assessed by some simple facts. Preston Manning spent 15 days (including the last crucial five days) of the 36-day election campaign in Ontario. Reform had the mother of one of Paul Bernardo's victims speak at an election rally just a week before the vote.

The party actually started campaigning and running election ads in Ontario last summer, using the ad firm that helped elect Mike Harris. Ontario Reform organizer Marnee Stern openly talked about how the multi-million dollar "pre-campaign" campaign was designed to push "hot button" issues. Manning chose Ontario as the place to unveil the party's Fresh Start platform back in October, and he boasted about the party being poised to win 67 seats there.

In 1993, Reform spent a total of \$1.5 million on its national campaign, only a fraction of which was



spent in Ontario. The party won one seat in Ontario and came second in 56.

In 1997, Reform spent \$7 million on the national campaign, 40 percent of it in Ontario. Reform won *no* Ontario seats for its extravagance, and came second in only 38 ridings.

The Tory party, whom Manning pronounced a corpse in the last week of the campaign, actually won a seat and finished second more times than Reform.

All of this Ontario election trivia is interesting in light of what Manning said to the *Toronto Sun* on May 22. He cast Ontario in the role of Canada's "honest broker" which would decide whether the Tories or Reform should be the voice of Canada's right. Of course, Manning's sympathetic press will never be so impolite as to bring this up again after Reform's disastrous showing in Ontario.

Manning threw everything he had at the 1997 campaign, "misspeaking" himself and employing tactics that could seriously damage his political future. When a member of the Much Music election forum audience challenged Manning on his background working for oil companies, Manning claimed he had worked for 20 years as president of a company whose chief shareholder was aboriginal. Yet in his own book, *The New Canada*, Manning clearly states that the local aboriginal band did not own any more of this company than other investors, and held less than ten percent of the shares.

Manning seriously miscalculated the resonance of anti-French bigotry in Ontario. Midway through, due to his failure in the leaders' debate and the gains made by the Tories at the expense of the Bloc in Quebec, Manning was in danger of losing "the fight for the right" to Charest.

Reform attack ads appeared, graphically cancelling out leaders from Quebec as legitimate national leaders. If there was any doubt about what Manning was up to, he publicly condemned the choice of a francophone as Canada's negotiator on the salmon treaty.

Another hint that Reform was going to foster English-French antagonism was their nominating a former candidate of the fiercely anti-French, anti-bilingualism Confederation of Regions Party to run in the only seat Reform held last time in Ontario. As well, Manning made assertions that his unilingualism was of no concern, statements that got extensive coverage in the francophone media.

Manning seemed deliberately to do provocative things, such as choosing Quebec City to unveil the leaked Liberal platform, but speaking entirely in English. Such a stunt is the equivalent of Gilles Duceppe flying to Calgary to hold a news conference conducted entirely in French.

And what did Manning gain from all his playing with fire? Not only did Ontario voters reject him, but he is unlikely to have gained any new friends on Bay

Street for resuscitating the Bloc's fortunes at a time when both support for the party and for sovereignty had been declining in Quebec. Manning's appeal to bigotry may have put Reform over the top in six close ridings in the West. However, he was never in danger of losing his western base or failing to get official opposition status.

What can we expect from Reform in the new parliament? The Bloc and Reform may shore up their respective political fortunes by feeding off each other's inflammatory statements. The media will describe Reform as "the voice of the West," conveniently forgetting about Reform's thin support in Manitoba and the fact that there are four western premiers who are critical of Reform.

We can also expect Reform to drop its broad-based populist pretence and become more rabidly right-wing. Newly elected Calgary MP Rob Anders is an anti-union zealot who headed up a "voluntary unionism" campaign for the National Citizens' Coalition. Anders was trained in hardball political tactics at a Republican leadership institute in the U.S.

Jason Kenney is another new, extremely right-wing MP from Calgary. Former head of the anti-government Canadian Taxpayers' Federation, Kenney is also on the board of an institute that propagates the notion that daycare harms children.

With the increased number of fundamentalist Christians from B.C. in the Reform caucus, Reform will undoubtedly be pushing for a national referendum to have abortion not covered by medicare.

So, how to cope with four more years of Reform and its mean-spiritedness? One step for personal mental health is to stop getting your news from the Southam and Sun chain newspapers. Catch up on your back issues of *Briarpatch* and the other alternative publications that have been piling up.

If you just *have* to have a daily newspaper, get on the Internet and log on to the *Toronto Star* site: [www.thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com) *The Star* presents its own aggravations (eg. it runs Andrew Coyne's columns) but at least it makes a stab at the kind of balanced coverage that is fast disappearing from the Black press.

And if you are sick and tired of hearing Reformers dominating the call-in shows, do what Reform Party members do: make phoning in to a talk show a regular commitment and relate the topic under discussion to an issue you care about.

As usual, the best antidote to Reform or any other kind of dread is to take some concrete action. In the introduction to his book analyzing Reform's progress, Trevor Harrison cites W.B. Yeats: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."

*Ellen Gould is a Vancouver-based writer and researcher.*



# Where Next for the Federal NDP?

---

*Despite winning 21 seats and regaining party status, it was a mixed victory for Canada's social democrats.*

---

by Guy Marsden



**A**fter three and a half years in the political wilderness, the federal New Democratic Party staged a modest political comeback by winning 21 seats and official party status in the June 2 election.

The NDP made an electoral breakthrough in Atlantic Canada, a region hit hard by the Liberal government's cuts to transfer payments and unemployment insurance. The party won eight seats in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, an all-time high.

Party leader Alexa McDonough won her Halifax seat by over 11,000 votes, a contest pundits had predicted would be a tough one.

But it was a mixed victory for Canada's social democrats. The NDP fell far short of McDonough's goal of winning the largest amount of seats ever, which was 43 seats in the 1988 election.

The NDP also failed to make any gains in the traditional strongholds of B.C. and Saskatchewan and was shut out in Canada's industrial heartland. Since its creation in 1962, the NDP has been able to win five to 13 seats in Ontario, but has come up empty in the last two elections.

Moreover, the NDP was only able to attract 11 percent of the national popular vote, up from the seven percent it received in 1993, but far below the

average NDP vote of 17.2 percent recorded between 1962 and 1988. In fact, the 1997 performance represented the second-worst showing in the party's history in terms of the percentage of the popular vote.

Nonetheless, party supporters were generally pleased with McDonough's feisty performance and the return to official party status.

"The agenda now is creating jobs, rebuilding the country's social programs, and sharing more equally the enormous wealth that is concentrated in too few hands," said Canadian Labour Congress president Bob White, noting that six of the 16 new NDP MPs are labour activists.

Official party status will give the New Democrats in Ottawa more media coverage and funding for research. Issues such as jobs and health care will undoubtedly be raised more often in the House of Commons.

Still, it is highly questionable whether a handful of NDP MPs will be able to stop social program cutbacks and other neo-liberal policies any more than a much larger New Democratic caucus was able to stop NAFTA, the GST, cuts to the CBC or the elimination of the family allowance program. With the Reform Party as the official opposition, this task is made even more difficult.



More problematic is the federal NDP's inability, or unwillingness, to articulate a coherent alternative vision to the dominant neo-liberal ideology of deficit reduction, free trade, privatization and deregulation.

The NDP's campaign slogan "Shake up Ottawa, Wake up the Liberals" was hardly a rallying cry to build the "new Jerusalem." Essentially, the party ran a defensive, rear-guard campaign that emphasized achieving a better balance in the House of Commons. McDonough explicitly ruled out forming government.

Nonetheless, the NDP released a comprehensive election platform, *A Framework for Canada's Future*, that outlined \$19 billion in extra spending to restore federal funding cuts to health, education and social services, add new pharmacare and home care programs and invest in public transit, water and sewage treatment and social housing to create jobs.

The NDP's program would be paid for by raising taxes on the wealthy, the corporations, and by economic growth resulting from the public investment and job creation measures.

#### **The Saskatchewan Way?**

The Keynesian-inspired platform of the federal

NDP, based in part on the 1997 Alternative Federal Budget, contrasted sharply with the fiscal conservative approach of the Saskatchewan NDP government.

Still, at campaign stops in Saskatchewan, McDonough persisted in referring to the Romanow government as a model for the federal NDP and made the ridiculous assertion that the Saskatchewan government pursued an expansionary job creation policy to reduce the deficit, a claim that even Romanow would likely disagree with.

"The Saskatchewan record is very important because what it demonstrates is what you can do if you make jobs the number one priority," McDonough said at the campaign kick-off, even though the province has only seen a net increase of 3,000 jobs since the election of the Romanow government in 1991.

McDonough also claimed that the Saskatchewan NDP government protected vital social programs despite the closure of 52 hospitals, the erosion of the prescription drug plan, the cuts to universities, and the elimination of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

The deficit-phobic Saskatchewan party establishment was clearly uncomfortable with the massive spending called for in the federal NDP's plat-

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Is this the kind of treatment workers deserve in this province?



By boycotting products such as Pepsi, 7-Up, Crush and Schweppes, we can support the RWDSU members who are fighting to gain fair treatment for all workers in Saskatchewan.





form. Coincidentally, only limited numbers of copies of *A Framework for Canada's Future* were sent to Saskatchewan, which was targeted for up to ten NDP seats.

If McDonough didn't understand the difference between the left-leaning federal platform and the fiscal conservative approach of the Romanow model, newspaper editorial writers did.

The federal NDP's platform was chastised by the media for its old "tax and spend" policies, which contrasted with the "new thinking" offered by Romanow and Tony Blair's Labour Party in Britain.

The Romanow government's opposition to the federal government's gun control legislation (Bill C-68) also forced McDonough, a gun control advocate, into a difficult position. In the end, the federal NDP stated its support for gun control in principle, but called for a review of the gun registry component. McDonough was unable to identify the specific problems with the legislation.

The federal NDP also moved to the right on law and order issues. The election platform called for reforming the Young Offenders Act and punishment of criminal activity "in keeping with the severity of the crime."

#### **The Way Forward**

Confusion about the Romanow model aside, McDonough's NDP had difficulty taking advantage of the huge void on the left of the political spectrum.

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Although Canadians consistently ranked unemployment as their primary concern, the NDP's platform, which emphasized job creation, failed to catch on with voters.

The media's manufacturing of "national unity" as the main campaign issue was partly to blame. The NDP, without a position on the Quebec issue, was pushed to the sidelines as the other parties quarrelled over the issue of "distinct society" and plans to deal with Quebec separation.

If the NDP is ever to become a serious player at the national level, it will have to develop an independent constitutional stance. Some left thinkers have advanced the notion of asymmetrical federalism as an approach that would give Quebec more powers, but maintain a strong federal government for English Canada. This would require a confrontation with power-hungry premiers like B.C.'s Glen Clark, a prospect McDonough might not relish.

McDonough is correct to say that Canadians care more about unemployment and social programs, but the national question will likely not go away and therefore has to be dealt with.

The issue of globalization is another that the federal NDP has to address in a more fundamental way. On the one hand, the New Democrats favour the introduction of an international tax to control speculative currency trading, commonly called the Tobin Tax.

On the other hand, the party now accepts Canada's trade agreements, including NAFTA. Instead of calling for its abrogation, the NDP is now focused on broadening the trade agreement to include environmental, labour and human rights standards.

*A Framework for Canada's Future* briefly discusses the need to redistribute work time more equitably to reduce unemployment and provide more leisure for the overworked, but stops short of any bold promises. France's socialist coalition recently won a majority of seats with a platform, that among other things, promised to reduce the work week from 39 to 35 hours. The NDP needs to examine the policies of shorter work weeks, a guaranteed annual income and methods of spreading the benefits of technology more broadly.

The party's platform excludes any mention of democratic reform, an issue that unfortunately has been vacated to the Reform Party. In the aftermath of the 1997 federal election, the time seems ripe to raise the issue of proportional representation, election financing and a host of other democratic initiatives.

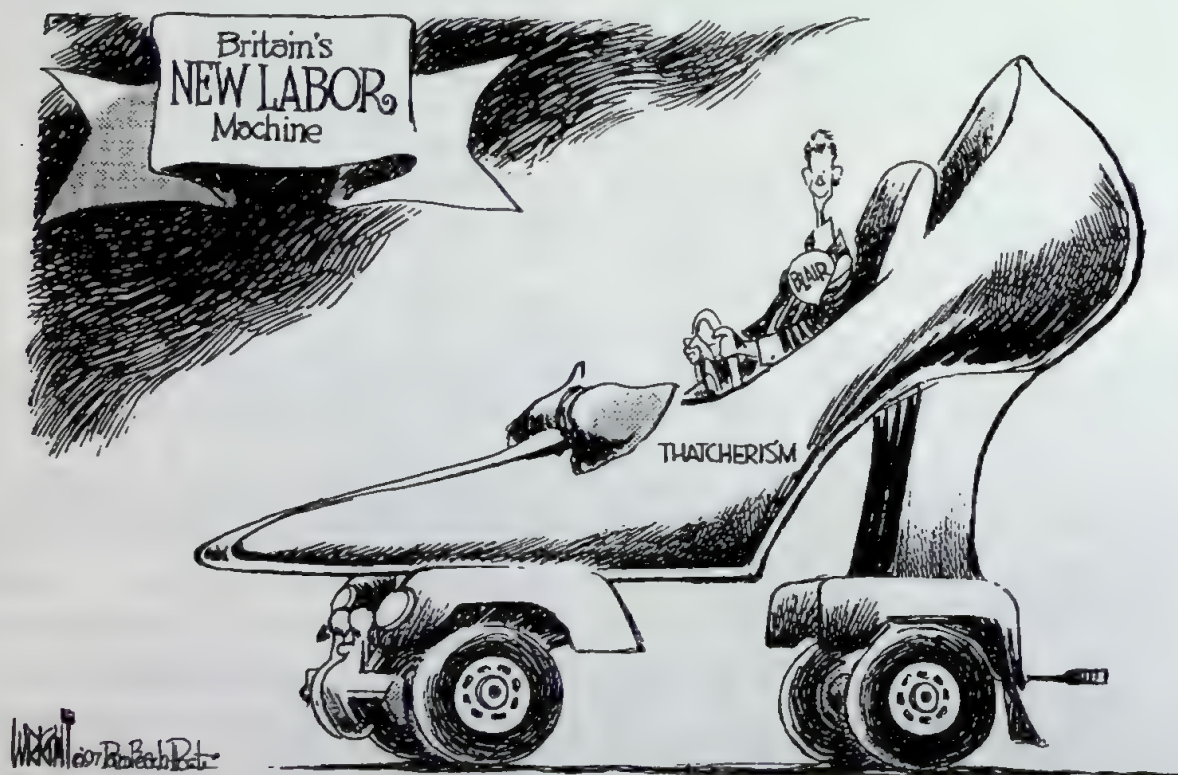
These and many other challenges demand a response from Canada's social democrats, which failed to undertake a comprehensive rethinking of its policies after the electoral disaster of 1993. Is McDonough's NDP up to the challenge?

*Guy Marsden is a regular contributor to Briarpatch.*



# The British Election

*New Labour, regionalization  
and self-determination.*



by Marjorie Brown & Beth Clarke

**T**he results of the Canadian election demonstrate a resurgence of an old problem in Canadian politics: regionalization. Since colonization, successive governments have had to mediate the troubled waters of dissatisfied regional movements. At times, these movements erupt into calls for separation; at times they reflect a lack of commonality or nationhood amongst the regions.

Canada is not the only country to suffer from a fractious and periodically precarious unity. Historically, the elite powers which moulded and shaped modern nation states generally paid little heed to ethnic and/or cultural identities, or to the wishes for self-determination of their inhabitants. As a result, it is not unheard of to witness the break-up of a nation state, the separation or partition of a region, or the

existence of a determined, even terrorist, separatist movement.

Britain, which like Canada also recently underwent a general election, has within its borders many groups who do not consider themselves "British," or at the very least do not identify with the predominantly English culture of the British elites. Much like the aboriginal or Québécois alienation from the "Canadian" identity, this has been the source of great division, and in the case of Britain, also great bloodshed, many wars and historical suffering.

As with the recent Canadian election, the results of the British election make clear statements about the direction of Britain's different regions. The Conservative Party, which ruled Britain for the past 18 years, was absolutely and thoroughly defeated in a



spectacle reminiscent of Canada's routing of the Mulroney Conservatives in 1993. This defeat resulted in the British Tories losing all of their seats in Scotland and Wales, not to mention a change in the composition of MPs sent over from Northern Ireland. The Tory party, the old voice of the status quo, now literally has no say whatsoever in the direction these regions may choose to take.

It is already apparent that certain radical changes are about to be made, not only out of a commitment to certain philosophical ideals, such as democracy and the right to self-determination, but out of sheer political expediency too.

New Labour is not the old Labour party that was in opposition. From the time of the death of Tony Blair's predecessor in 1993 to the present, Labour has undergone a radical change of its own. Many feel that the party has betrayed its trade union and social democratic/socialist roots.

The evidence appears to support this conclusion: no longer does Labour support the renationalization of Britain's railways, it will impose a one-time wind-fall royalties tax on the utilities privatized by Thatcher, but it will not seek to bring them back under public ownership. From competitiveness in the new global economy, the need to create an environment which is supportive of business, to getting single moms off assistance - all have been discussed and to a certain extent embraced by New Labour. (Like the "new" PCs in Canada, Labour has moved to distance itself from its history by undergoing a subtle name change. For the PCs this was an attempt to minimize a disastrous legacy, while New Labour appears to perceive something disastrous about its at times socialist legacy, much to the disappointment of many "old" Labour supporters.)

The espousal of many of the policies favoured by so many other governments which heed the beck and call of the business class puts Labour in a difficult position. It has to demonstrate that it is different from the previous Tory government, and indeed some of its plans are different. Labour has moved rapidly to begin the process of implementing a minimum wage level, something resisted by both the business class and the Tories. But in truth, taken as a whole, much of the Labour plan does very little to advance the cause of labour, or disrupt stultified class relations in Britain.

So what is a somewhat radical government of change to do? How to appear to enact substantive change, while not really disrupting the status quo is

the challenge Tony Blair finds before him. In the matter of constitutional change and devolution of powers to the regions he finds his answers.

The Tories so firmly resisted any change for so long, to do *anything* in this area is indeed a radical break. And so, free of any possible Tory objections, the New Labour government appears ready to grant a limited parliament to both Scotland and Wales. The result: New Labour appears new, vibrant, dynamic and a force of progressive change, and in some ways, particularly for the people in Scotland and Wales, it is.

In other ways, however, in ways which would make real changes to the relations of domination and exploitation which have existed in Britain for so long, New Labour is anything but new.

Events during the first month of the New Labour government have cast a shadow of doubt as to what is intended for Northern Ireland and how new the plan for that region may be. The Irish Republican party, Sinn Fein, received roughly 16.9 percent of the popular vote in Northern Ireland, giving it a clear mandate to participate in the decisions of the new government, especially with regards to the all-party peace talks aimed at determining Northern Ireland's future.

Sinn Fein's 16.9 percent translated into two seats in the House of Commons, the same number of seats as are held by the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). This is the first time that the Unionists (those who wish Northern Ireland to remain a part of Britain), through DUP, and the Republicans, through Sinn Fein, have had equal representation at Westminster.



Tony Blair

This Republican mandate was ignored by Tony Blair when he gave his opening speech in Belfast after his election. Blair reassured Unionists that the Six Counties which make up Northern Ireland will always remain a part of Britain, even if a majority of the residents there consented to a change in status. The British government, according to Blair, will have the final say in the matter, and their say is not in favour of uniting Ireland. This reaffirmation of the Unionist veto over Northern Ireland's future is a dramatic change in Labour Party policy. Prior

to the election, the Labour Party was on record as supporting a united Ireland, if achieved democratically through a consent policy.



Blair's emphasis on Unionist policies does little to promise a new peaceful future for Northern Ireland. It does little encourage the IRA (the main military arm of the Republican movement, which is linked with Sinn Fein) to engage in a cease-fire prior to entering peace talks, as it appears that the outcome of these talks is already determined. Sinn Fein, and others in the Republican movement, have repeatedly stressed that democracy is not a concept to be picked up and then dropped at will, and Sinn Fein clearly has a democratic mandate to be involved, in good faith and on par with the DUP, in the discussions surrounding the future of Northern Ireland.

Local elections in Northern Ireland have echoed this mandate. Throughout the Six Counties, Sinn Fein has had resounding support from the electorate. They have voting parity with DUP at the Belfast City Council for the first time as well as increases in several other constituencies. Contrary to the focus perpetrated by Britain of Sinn Fein as a party mired down by its links to the terrorist IRA, many of the people of Northern Ireland have clearly accepted the promise of Sinn Fein's leader, Gerry Adams, that a vote for Sinn Fein is a vote for peace.

Blair has been criticized for his stance on imminent all-party peace talks. Labour plans to continue to allow Loyalists (representatives of the terrorist organization which engages in violence to advance the Unionist cause) to attend the meetings, while barring Sinn Fein.

Considering the recent sectarian killings by Loyalist terrorists, this represents a shocking double standard, one clearly not condoned by the interna-

**The Conservative Party, which ruled Britain for the past 18 years, was absolutely and thoroughly defeated in a spectacle reminiscent of Canada's routing of the Mulroney Conservatives in 1993.**

tional community. Most, including U.S. president Bill Clinton, are urging the British government to move ahead with inclusive peace talks as soon as possible. In addition, many are urging New Labour not to ignore the recommendations made last winter by a panel, led by U.S. Senator Mitchell, regarding the necessary inclusive nature of the peace talks. Unfortunately the exclusion of Sinn Fein was the policy of the former Tory government, a policy which New Labour ap-

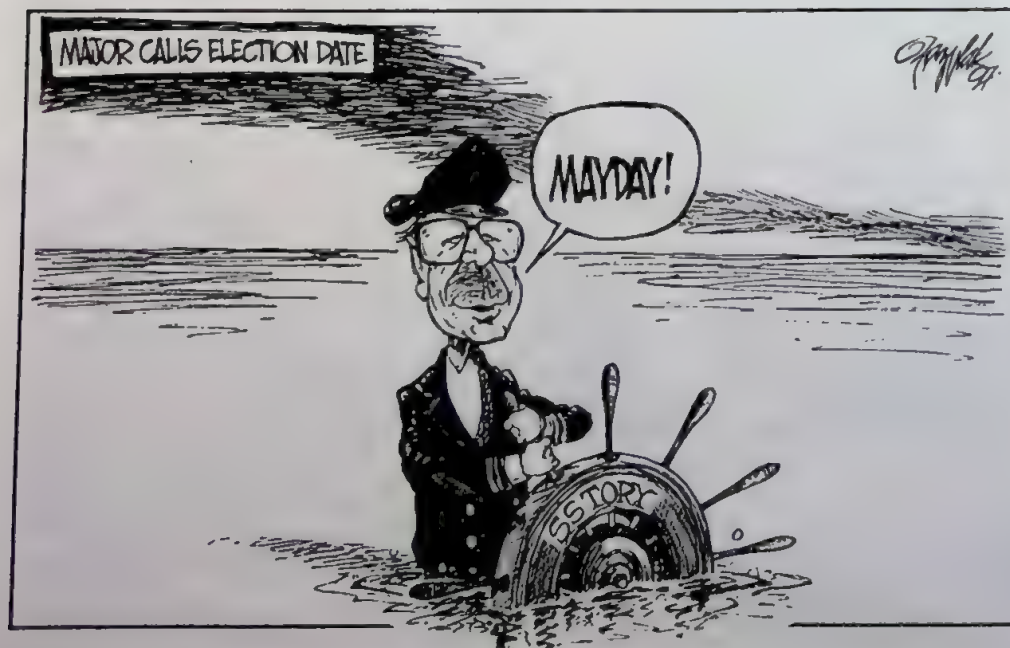
pears about to repeat.

The next few months will be crucial in developing New Labour's long-term plan for Northern Ireland. There is some hope that under the direction of the new Home Secretary for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, movement will occur.

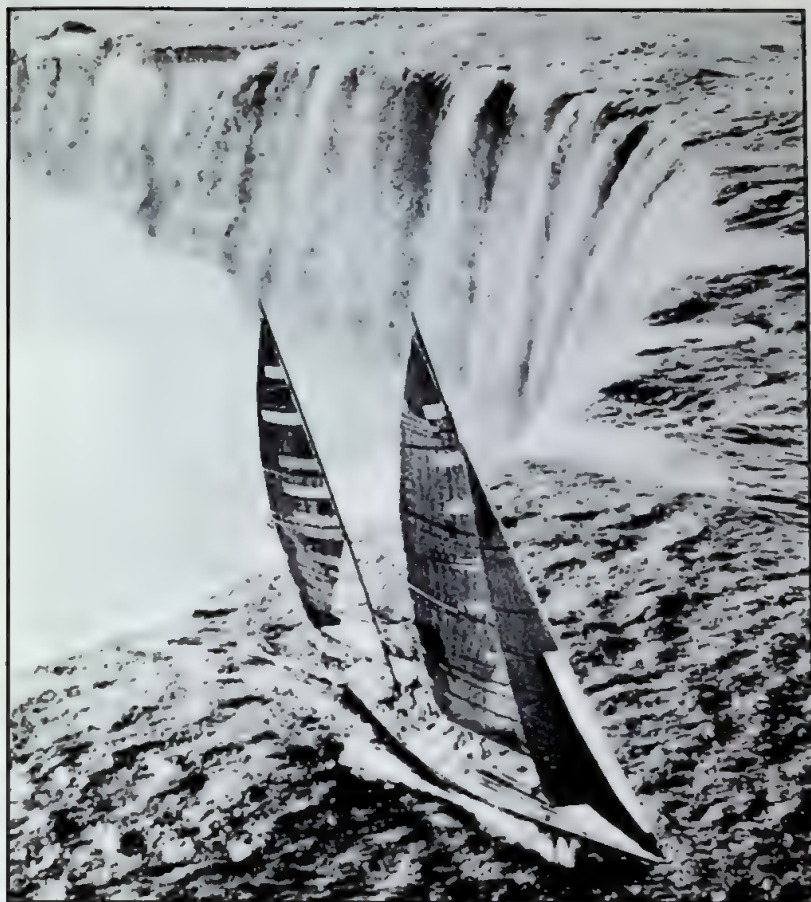
As well, Blair has demonstrated some conciliatory moves towards the Irish. During a commemorative ceremony for the one million Irish who died during the Potato Famine, Blair issued a statement of apology on behalf of the British government. This is the first formal apology and recognition of the British role in shipping out crops under armed guard during the famine while the Irish people were left to starve. The significance of Blair's statement should not be underplayed.

There is a general consensus that John Major and the Tories squandered the best chance for a lasting peace by incessant delays at gathering together all parties for peace talks. This is reflected as peoples' faith in Sinn Fein continues to grow. Clearly, all concerned with not only Northern Ireland, but the direction Britain takes as a whole, hope that New Labour does not repeat the old Tory mistakes.

*Marjorie Brown is beginning an MA in Political Science at the University of Regina. She resided in the U.K. for almost two years. Beth Clarke is completing an MA in Social Studies at the University of Regina. She has travelled through, lived and worked in the North of Ireland.*







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# SAY WHAT??

## PMSed

"Forgive me for saying this, but what would happen if we were all PMSed the same week? Can you imagine what the Parliament of Canada would be like?"

- Deborah Grey,

Reform MP, ridiculing the idea of having equal numbers of men and women in Parliament, March 2, 1997.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

"What does subsidized day care mean to you? I will tell you what it means to me as a country boy. It means that a professional couple in Toronto can load their child into a BMW and take it to the Silver Spoon Happy Centre For Lucky Tots...."

- Lee Morrison,

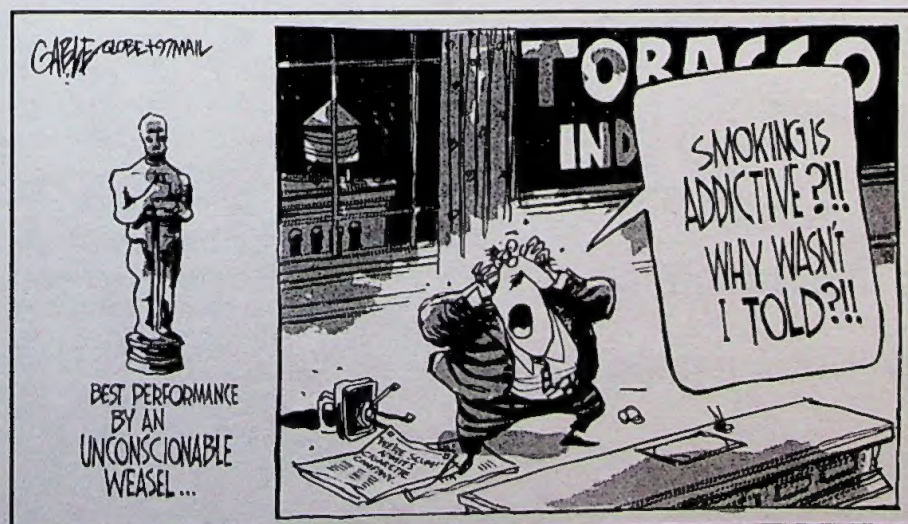
Reform MP, in the House of Commons, November 21, 1996.

## MISCONCEPTION

"There is a general misconception that without a minimum wage workers would be exploited. Employers want the best workers available and often compete to hire them. Low wages often show there is an abundance of workers, which is just an example of the supply and demand concept. The minimum wage, rather than bringing the poverty level up, has the reverse effect. It encourages exploitation."

- Dale Johnston,

Reform MP, in the House of Commons, June 12, 1996.



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"I love Gummy Bears. . .and I want Gummy Bears and I like Gummy Bears and I don't like it when I don't eat my Gummy Bears, but I'm certainly not addicted to them."

- James Morris,

president of Philip Morris, saying tobacco is no more addictive than Gummy Bears candy.



# The Latest Attack

*By expanding the number of "essential" public services, the Manitoba government is increasing its attack on the right to strike.*

by Glen Makahonuk

**T**he Gary Filmon Tory government is once again attacking workers' rights in Manitoba. The latest attack is aimed at the collective bargaining process and the right to strike.

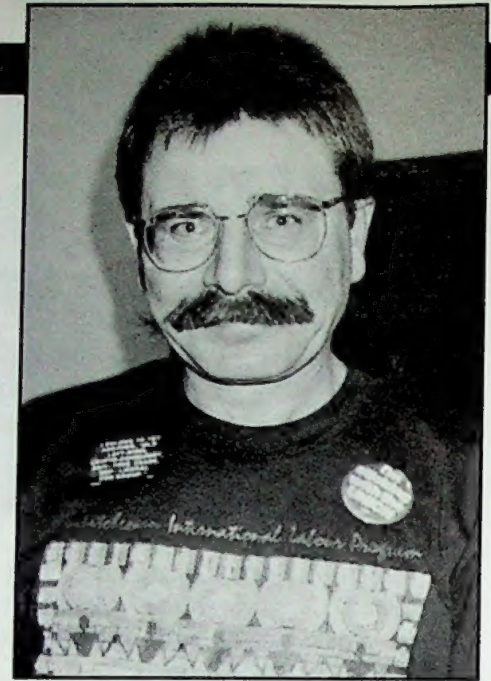
In April, the Manitoba government introduced Bill 15: The Government Essential Services Amendment Act. This legislation is designed to provide more collective bargaining power to public sector employers, particularly those in hospitals, health services insurance, child and family services, and regional health authorities. This Bill expands on previous legislation passed in 1996 to include a larger slice of the public sector.

Minister of Labour Harold Gilleshammer announced that the

Manitoba government introduced the new legislation to ensure that services essential to Manitobans will be provided in the event that public sector employees, represented by unions such as the Canadian Union of Public Employees, go on strike.

According to Gilleshammer, Bill 15 would provide for a process to negotiate voluntary essential services agreements 90 days prior to the end of a collective agreement. If an agreement can't be reached, then the existing provisions of the legislation will apply, with management designating the essential services and the employees necessary to deliver those services.

This means that public sector employers will have control over



the collective bargaining process and will try to get greater concessions and roll-backs from unions. By taking away workers' right to strike, unions will be rendered powerless and ineffective to negotiate decent collective agreements.

Although the legislation provides public sector unions with the opportunity to appeal the number of employees necessary to maintain essential services to the Manitoba Labour Board, it doesn't seem likely that they would get a sympathetic hearing from a Tory-appointed board.

Bill 15 is an attack on the right to strike. Ed Finn, a research associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, says "the right to strike is a fundamental freedom - one that is just as vital to workers as other basic rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. A nation that attempts to prohibit the right to strike cannot succeed and still remain a democracy."

In response to this anti-union legislation, the Manitoba labour movement is in the midst of developing a fightback campaign. Hopefully, they will be able to overturn Bill 15 and defend the right to strike.

*Glen Makahonuk is president of CUPE Saskatchewan.*

**...the right to strike is a fundamental freedom - one that is just as vital to workers as other basic rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. A nation that attempts to prohibit the right to strike cannot succeed and still remain a democracy.**



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Worldwide Profit: \$US 245 millions (1996) (up 43 % from 1995)

Business Strategy: "ServiceMaster believes there is potential for expansion in the education market due to its current relatively low penetration of that market and the trend of educational facilities to consider outsourcing more of their servicing requirements." (Annual Report filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 27/3/1997)

Corporate Record: Washington D.C. school officials recently cancelled a janitorial and maintenance contract with ServiceMaster, saying its own staff will do a better job for much less money. The move followed a damning report from the city's Inspector General, who found that the company overbilled the District by more than \$6.5 million. "My impression of ServiceMaster is just awful," the auditor told a reporter, adding that although school officials failed to adequately monitor the contract, "there was also quite egregious attempts on the part of ServiceMaster to overbill." (Washington Times, 24/12/96)

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# A very important anniversary



## 25 years of safer workplaces

Twenty-five years ago the Saskatchewan legislature passed the Occupational Health and Safety Act, with the strong support of the labour movement.

The Act provided employees with the right to refuse dangerous work, to participate in Occupational Health and Safety Committees and to know what hazardous elements exist in the workplace and to be adequately protected from them.

For a quarter of a century the Occupational Health and Safety Act has saved lives, reduced injuries, prevented industrial diseases and given workers the ability to protect themselves while on the job.

On the 25th anniversary of the Act, labour pays tribute to this important milestone in the lives of Saskatchewan working people.



*Saskatchewan  
Federation of Labour*